



JAMES E. RISCH

United States Senator for Idaho

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Brad Hoaglund
208-342-5434

RISCH SUPPORTS BUDGET FREEZE

Washington, DC – Idaho Senator Jim Risch voted in favor of an amendment offered by Senator John McCain today that would freeze domestic spending at current levels. The amendment was to the \$410 billion Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 and failed by a vote of 32-63.

“When our families and businesses have to make do with less, so should our federal government. This amendment would have just frozen agency spending at last year’s level. But we were not successful in even freezing spending, let alone cutting spending. Again, Congress is still conducting business as usual and I am very disappointed that this spending spree continues,” said Risch.

The omnibus bill is made up of nine of the thirteen annual appropriations bills that set the budgets for federal agencies. Last fall President Bush threatened to veto the bills due to the spending increases, and Congress chose to wait until now to work on them, even though the fiscal year started October 1.

Projections show that the omnibus bill, HR 1105, would increase budgets by 8 percent over fiscal year 2008 spending. Agencies have been operating under a continuing resolution that expires March 6, but could be extended. The House passed the bill by a 245-78 vote. The Senate is expected to take up a final vote on Thursday.

As debate continues on the bill, Risch promised to push for other amendments that could be brought to the floor during the week. “I will certainly support the amendment that prohibits the Federal Communications Commission from spending any money to reinstate the ‘fairness doctrine’,” Risch said. “I also intend to support an amendment that preserves a public comment period for revisions to the Endangered Species Act.”

He noted the Alaska Senators were attempting to add the amendment on the ESA since the administration wants to withdraw two previous rules on polar bears and regulation of carbon dioxide emissions without public notice, public comment or judicial review.

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